

The Actor and The Janitor

HARRY L. NEWTON'S One-Act Comedy Sketches, Monologues and Dramatic Episodes

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Estelle Williams, } College Chums

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THE ACTOR AND THE JANITOR

A COMIC NOVELTY ACT

By

HARRY L. NEWTON

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THE ACTOR AND THE JANITOR

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CHARACTERS.

ANDY KNITT—A Vaudeville Actor.

MUSHMOUTH—Janitor in a 10c. Theatre.

SCENE—A 10c. Theatre during a performance.

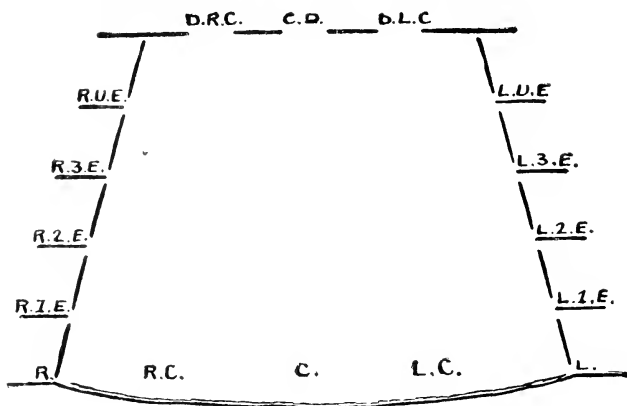
Characters. & Costumes.

KNITT—Wears a white flannel suit and straw hat.

MUSHMOUTH—Wears striped overalls and jumper.

NOTE—*While the part of Mushmouth is written for Blackface character, it can be played in any dialect at option of performer.*

DIAGRAM OF STAGE.



AUDIENCE.

- L. 1 E.—Left first entrance.
- R. 1 E.—Right first entrance.
- L. U. E.—Left upper entrance.
- C.—Centre of stage.
- R. C.—Right centre of stage.
- L. C.—Left centre of stage.
- C. D.—Centre door.
- D. R. C.—Door right centre.
- D. L. C.—Door left centre.

THE ACTOR AND THE JANITOR

A Comedy Novelty Act

BY HARRY L. NEWTON.

[KNITT enters at rise, advances to Center and sings a verse of some lively song. As he goes into chorus, Mushmouth enters from front of theatre and walks down center aisle. He has a broom in his hands and busies himself picking up scraps of paper, etc., all the while singing some popular song. Knitt tries to go on with his song, but finally gives up in disgust.]

KNITT—(*To Mushmouth.*) Say, what's the idea. I'm talking to you.

MUSHMOUTH—Hey?

KNITT—You're trying to crab my act.

MUSHMOUTH—Am I?

KNITT—You certainly are. Now stop that and let me do my act.

MUSHMOUTH—Are you goin' to do a act?

KNITT—I am. I am an actor. Wouldn't you like to be an actor?

5 THE ACTOR AND THE JANITOR

MUSHMOUTH—Yes—wouldn't you?

KNITT—That'll do you. I want you to understand that I clean up in every theatre I play in.

MUSHMOUTH—Oh, you ain't got so much on me. I "clean up" this theatre every day.

KNITT—Say, do you know what I think of you?

MUSHMOUTH—No. But if you think what I think you think, I dare you to say it.

KNITT—I want to know why you began to clean up right in the middle of my act.

MUSHMOUTH—Say, boss, that's easy. I always do my cleanin' when a rotten act comes on.

KNITT—Oh, I'm a rotten act, am I?

MUSHMOUTH—Sure. You ain't no actor.

KNITT—How do you make that out?

MUSHMOUTH—You ain't got no dog.

KNITT—Well, I've got an alibi. I had a dog a few days ago. I had a bulldog, if you must know. I paid \$2,000 for him.

MUSHMOUTH—How much?

KNITT—Three thousand dollars.

MUSHMOUTH—I guess I heard you the first time.

KNITT—I had this bulldog just three days when I was offered \$5,000 for him. Yesterday I sold him for \$6,000.

MUSHMOUTH—Gosh, but that's some bull!

KNITT—Now that's quite enough from you. You take my gentle tip and permit me to go on with my act.

MUSHMOUTH—Have you-all got your act with you?

KNITT—I have, and it's a mighty good act, too.

MUSHMOUTH—Say, are you trying to kid me or show me a good time?

KNITT—Furthermore, you black mutt, I am engaged for a Belasco production next season. (*Mushmouth laughs heartily.*) Well, what are you laughing at?

MUSHMOUTH—I was jes' wonderin' what Belasco will say when he finds it out.

KNITT—Say, you're pretty funny yourself. What do you want to be a janitor for?

MUSHMOUTH—Gosh, I git paid for this—good money too.

KNITT—(*Laughs.*) Good money?

MUSHMOUTH—Sure. It ain't so very much money, but it's good.

KNITT—Well, I'll say this much. If I didn't have any more brains than you, I'd put a gun to my head.

MUSHMOUTH—And if I didn't have no more brains than you, I'd pull the trigger.

KNITT—Well, let me tell you right back, it takes brains to be up here on the stage.

MUSHMOUTH—I took lessons for two years one year.

KNITT—Oh, you did, eh? What were you studying?

MUSHMOUTH—I don't know, but my teacher told me that if I took lessons three years more the next year, I'd make a good piano mover.

KNITT—I believe you. You don't know the first rudiments of music. Do you? No. I knew you didn't. In the first place, there is the scale. Do you know what a scale is?

MUSHMOUTH—Sure. A scale is a fish's steering gear.

KNITT—Nonsense. Now a scale of music consists of eight notes. Do, ra, mi, fa, sol, la, se, do. See? Do on the bottom and do on the top.

MUSHMOUTH—Dough on the bottom and dough on the top ain't music.

KNITT—Oh, is that so. Then what is it?

MUSHMOUTH—Pie.

KNITT—Now just for that you come up here on the stage. You're too bright to be a janitor.

MUSHMOUTH—I'll come under one condition. I jes' got to sing.

KNITT—You're on; come on.

Mushmouth goes on stage and together they sing a song.

KNITT (*After song*)—Are you still paying attention to that yellow gal I saw you with the other day?

MUSHMOUTH—No. I ain't paying attention to her anymore.

KNITT—Why not?

MUSHMOUTH—'Cause I married her.

KNITT—And when did you marry her?

MUSHMOUTH—Sometime last evenin'.

KNITT—And do you love your wife?

MUSHMOUTH—I don't know. I ain't been home since mornin'.

KNITT—Did you know that I am to be married shortly?

MUSHMOUTH—No. Is you?

KNITT—I surely am. The young lady I am to marry has so much money she doesn't know how to spend it.

MUSHMOUTH—Oh, you'll show her all right.

KNITT—See here. I'm not marrying this young woman for money.

MUSHMOUTH—Then what are you marrying her for—exercise?

KNITT—No, sir, I'm marrying her because I love her. And I'd love her if she didn't have a cent in the world or a stitch to her back.

MUSHMOUTH—Yes, I reckon you'd like her better.

KNITT—Oh, there's no use talking to you. You take everything vice versa from the way I mean it.

MUSHMOUTH—Vice versa?

KNITT—That's what I said, "vice versa." You don't even know the meaning of a simple term like that, do you?

MUSHMOUTH—Do you know what it means?

KNITT—I certainly do.

MUSHMOUTH—Then what do you ask me fo'?

KNITT—Oh, you're impossible. I'll tell you what "vice versa" means. When anyone says "vice versa," they mean just the opposite of what they have said.

MUSHMOUTH—Oh, just the opposite?

KNITT—Exactly. Just the opposite.

MUSHMOUTH—That's why I lost my last job.

KNITT—What do you mean?

MUSHMOUTH—The man I was working fo' kicked me so hard I couldn't eat my meals for a week.

KNITT—Where did he kick you? In the stomach?

MUSHMOUTH—No. In the vice versa.

KNITT—That's enough. I can see that a life on the stage is not at all best suited to you. I think I have a job for you all right, all right. My brother John is going to open a butcher shop.

MUSHMOUTH—My brother Alexander opened a butcher shop once—twelve o'clock at night.

KNITT—That was a queer time to open a butcher shop.

MUSHMOUTH—Yes, dat's what de judge said.

KNITT—Is he in business yet?

MUSHMOUTH—No, he's in jail yet.

KNITT—Oh, well, we're all liable to make mistakes.

MUSHMOUTH—My brother Alexander done took de steaks too.

KNITT—Well, it's too bad. How much time was he given?

MUSHMOUTH—He wasn't given any. The dern policeman was too quick fo' him.

KNITT—It will probably teach him a lesson. When he gets out he will probably start all over again.

MUSHMOUTH—Yes, dat's jes' what Alexander said. He says de next time he "starts" anythin', he won't get caught.

KNITT—Well, that'll do a plenty about your brother Alexander. I haven't the least use for anyone with bad ways.

MUSHMOUTH—Well, my brother Alexander says de butcher had "bad weighs" too; he was always short in his ways.

KNITT—No, no; I meant to say that your brother had been weighed and found wanting.

MUSHMOUTH—Sure, I understand; jes' like when dat butcher weighed meat.

KNITT—(*Laughs.*) Well, after all, you're not such a rummie as you look. I'm sure my brother will like you and that his butcher shop will prove a good opening for you.

MUSHMOUTH—My brother Alexander thought jes' like that, too.

KNITT—And as for work—pooh, that'll be a mere trifle! It will be so easy, in fact, that my brother will be ashamed to look at you when he hands you your money Saturday night.

MUSHMOUTH—Then maybe I'd better take money when your brother wasn't lookin' all de rest of de week.

KNITT—No, no; you mustn't do that. As I said before, the work is nothing. For instance, you arise at two a. m.

MUSHMOUTH—And what time do I gets to bed?

KNITT—Oh, about twelve, I believe. That will give you two hours of sleep. Just think of it. Two hours of sound, refreshing sleep.

MUSHMOUTH—Do yo' think your brother can spare me dat long?

KNITT—Oh, yes. You see you are working in a butcher shop, and an hour or two can be easily cut. A little joke, eh? Now upon arising you repair immediately to the back yard and pick some chickens.

MUSHMOUTH—Whose back yard?

KNITT—Why, my brother's, of course.

MUSHMOUTH—Oh! Let me ask yo'. Is dem chickens, wild chickens?

KNITT—No; absolutely tame.

MUSHMOUTH—Then why sneak on them in de night time?

KNITT—That'll do. Let me ask you something. Did you ever pick a chicken?

MUSHMOUTH—Lots of 'em.

KNITT—Good. Then you know exactly how it's done.

MUSHMOUTH—Oh, absolutely.

KNITT—Suppose you illustrate how you would pick a chicken.

MUSHMOUTH—(*Straightens tie, hat, etc., then walks a few steps, stops, smiles and takes off hat*

and bows.) Ah, there, little one; which way am you-all goin' dis merry evenin'?

KNITT—(*Angrily.*) Oh, that's the positive limit. You're going up and addressing some lady on the street.

MUSHMOUTH—Well, I thought dat was de kind of a chicken yo' meant.

KNITT—No, no; nothing like it. Now listen. I'll be a lady coming into the butcher shop for some meat. You are back of the counter ready to wait on customers. I'm going to see if you have any conception of what to do about a butcher shop. Now I'm Mrs. Jones, a good customer. (*Walks away a few steps, then returns, imitating the mincing steps of a woman.*) Ah, good morning, butcher. Fine morning, isn't it? How are your kidneys this morning?

MUSHMOUTH—How are my kidneys?

KNITT—Certainly, your kidneys. How are your kidneys?

MUSHMOUTH—Fine. How are yours?

KNITT—(*Angrily.*) Oh, it's no use; positively no use. I want to tell you here and now that your family has my sincere sympathy. And I feel especially sorry for your poor mother. How many children did your mother have?

MUSHMOUTH—Five.

KNITT—Five altogether, eh?

MUSHMOUTH—No. One at a time.

CURTAIN.

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Finally her father, Colonel Warren, a typical southern gentleman of the old school, calls on Clayton to persuade him to leave the country or in some way to break off the infatuation of his daughter. Louise learns of this visit of her father and also calls at Clayton's rooms to warn him as she fears her father may do him some harm. Clayton promises to disillusion Louise and assumes the disguise of Clayton's servant, and after hiding Colonel Warren, admits Louise to whom he paints Clayton as the most lewd villain.

Finally Colonel Warren appreciates the sterling qualities of Clayton, and the sacrifice he is making, enters the room and tells Louise, Clayton is only acting, and is in reality all she had imagined him to be—her ideal.

He consents to their union, and all ends felicitously.

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